

## Message Text

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46

ACTION H-01

INFO OCT-01 SS-07 ISO-00 NEA-07 NSC-06 NSCE-00 SSO-00 /022 W

----- 036469

O R 231200Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4470

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6626

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (BAKER, HOWEARD)

SUBJECT: CODEL BAKER

1. SENATOR BAKER AND STAFF AIDES TILLMAN AND BRONSON ARRIVED BEIRUT 1045 HOURS LOCAL MAY 22, PROCEEDED TO EMBASSY AND AT 1200 SAW FOREIGN MINISTER TAQLAM CONVERSATION LASTED 45 MINUTES. SENATOR SOUGHT TAQLA'S ADVICE AND VIEWS ON CURRENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN MIDDLE EAST.

2. TAQLA REPEATED MODERATE LEBANESE VIEWS AND EMPHASIZED (A) NECESSITY TO MAINTAIN MOTION TOWARD PEACE, (B) IMPORTANCE OF SOLVING PALESTINIAN ISSUE, NOT ONLY FOR AREA AS A WHOLE BUT ALSO FOR LEBANON, (C) FACT THAT PEACE AT THIS TIME WAS IN ISRAEL'S OWN INTEREST, (D) AND HIS BELIEF THAT 1967 BORDERS SHOULD FORM BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS. ON LATTER POINT, WHEN PRESSED GENTLY BY SENATOR, TAQLA ELABORATED HIS THINKING, SAYING THAT WHILE 1967 BORDERS MUST IN PRINCIPLE BE ACCEPTED BY ISRAEL, THEIR PRECISE DELINEATION COULD BE NEGOTIATED. RE VIETNAM'S INFLUENCE ON ARAB THINKING, HE SAID THAT AT THE MOMENT IT IS MINIMAL BUT COULD BECOME MAJOR FACTOR AND USEFUL SOVIET OR LEFTIST

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WEAPON IF MOMENTUM TOWARD PEACE WERE TO STOP. RE TIM-

ING, TAQLA OPINED THAT FURTHER PROGRESS IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE IS ESSENTIAL. HE COULD NOT RPT NOT BE PRECISE BUT DID INDICATE THAT IF NO WAR--NO PEACE SITUATION LASTS FOR ANOTHER TWELVE MONTHS THE SITUATION, BOT INTERNALLY IN LEBANON AND EXTERNALLY THROUGHOUT THE ARAB WORLD, WOULD BECOME EXPLOSIVE. TAQLA TERMED EGYPT'S ECONOMIC SITUATION AS DRASTIC AND SAID SADAT COULD NOT CONTINUE UNLESS THERE IS VISIBLE PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE.

3. FOLLOWING MEETING WITH TAQLA, CODEL WAS ENTERTAINED AT PRIVATE (I.E., NO EMBOFFS PRESENT) LUNCH HOSTED BY GEORGETOWN PROF. (AND LOCAL INSTITUTE FOR PALESTINIAN STUDIES DIRECTOR) HISHAM SHARABI AND ATTENDED BY VARIETY OF LEBANESE AND PALESTINIAN PERSONALITIES (E.G., NAHAR'S GHASSAN TUEINI, PLO FIGURES CHAFIQ AL HOUT AND NABIL SHA'ATH) AND PRIVATE AMERICANS RESIDING BEIRUT (E.G., REV. JOSEPH RYAN). DISCUSSION REPORTEDLY CENTERED ALMOST ENTIRELY ON PALESTINIAN PROBLEM AND ITS CENTRAL IMPORTANCE TO FUTURE ME PEACE-MAKING EFFORTS. AT 1600, CODEL HAD HOUR-LONG PIVATE SESSION WITH PLO CHAIRMAN 'ARAFAT, IN WHICH LATTER EXPOUNDED ON HISTORY OF PALESTINIAN "STRUGGLE" AND HIS VIEWS RE CURRENT SITUATION IN ME. DETAILS OF THIS DISCUSSION ARE PROPERLY RE-SERVED BY SENATOR FOR REPORTING TO SECRETARY IN MANNER HE DEEMS BEST. HOWEVER, HE INFORMED US THAT 'ARAFAT GAVE IMPRESSION OF BEING "WORRIED MAN"WHO VIEWS HIS "MODERATE" OPTIONS AS BECOMING INCREASINGLY LIMITED AND ISPESSIMISTIC ABOUT PLO BEING ACCORDED ANY PARTICIPATORY ROLE IN ME SETTLEMENT PROCESS. HE REPORTEDLY TOLD CODEL IN SOMEWHAT DISMAL TONE THAT, ACCORDING TO HIS ('ARAFAT'S) INFORMATION, NO RPT NO WORTHWHILE RESULTS FOR PLO HAD EMERGED FROM RECENT KISSINGER-GROMYKO TALKS IN VIENNA.

4. PRIOR TO DEPARTING AT 1945 FOR CAIRO, CODEL WAS ACCOSTED AT AIRPORT BY CBS-TV NEWS TEAM. RESULTANT INTERVIEW DWELT HEAVILY ON QUESTIONS ABOUT SENATOR BAKER'S VIEWS RE POSSIBILITY OF USG "RECOGNIZING" OR OTHERWISE INSTITUTING DIALOGUE WITH PLO IN NEAR FUTURE. SENATOR STEADFASTLY AVOIDED EXPRESSING ANY DEFINITE OPINION IN THIS REGARD, POINTING OUT THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER IS IN BETTER POSITION THAN HE TO EVALUATE DESIRABILITY OF SUCH STEPS AND THAT

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HE PREFERRED TO COMMUNICATE HIS OPINIONS AND IMPRESSIONS PRIVATELY TO SECRETARY INSTEAD OF MAKING THEM PUBLIC AT THIS TIME.  
GODLEY

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 23 MAY 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975BEIRUT06626  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750181-1032  
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**Line Count:** 111  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION H  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 08 APR 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <08 APR 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <09 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** CODEL BAKER  
**TAGS:** OREP, (BAKER, HOWEARD)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006